

# YOUTH SERVICES NOTES

Week of September 8, 2014

No. 181

## Virginia Library Association

### **Banned Books Week Display Award**

Planning your fall programming? Don't forget that **Banned Books Week** is **September 21-27, 2014** -- and we want to see how creatively your library encourages your patrons to support the right to read! The VLA Intellectual Freedom Committee supports access to information in all its wonderful varieties, formats and genres. We want to help libraries across Virginia highlight their collections, including materials which have been challenged.

Please share photographs (and any other PR materials) of your creative displays or programs with us (email to [mtdohert@vcu.edu](mailto:mtdohert@vcu.edu)) by **October 10th**. The winning library will be announced at the VLA conference in October.

You'll get bragging rights for the whole year -- good luck!

**M. Teresa Doherty, MLIS**  
Head, Information Services  
James Branch Cabell Library  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
PO Box 842033  
Richmond VA 23284-2033  
804 828-8658

[mtdohert@vcu.edu](mailto:mtdohert@vcu.edu)

member, VLA Intellectual Freedom Committee  
member, ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee

Email dated September 8, 2014 sent to VLA Google Groups list. ■



## American Library Association

### **Free Resources Available to Help Libraries Engage Community, Lead Change**

The American Library Association (ALA) is offering free materials to help libraries improve their community engagement and facilitation techniques.

The materials -- conversation guides, questionnaires, worksheets and webinars -- are designed to help libraries strengthen their roles as core community leaders and work with residents to bring positive change to their communities.

The resources were developed by **The Harwood Institute for Public**

**Innovation**, whose "turning outward" approach emphasizes changing the orientation of institutions and individuals from internal (organization-facing) to external (community-facing). This process entails taking steps to better understand communities; changing processes and thinking to make conversations more community-focused; being proactive about community issues; and developing shared aspirations.

Libraries are encouraged to download, copy and share the materials, free of charge, at [ala.org/LTC](http://ala.org/LTC).

**<http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/libraries-transforming-communities/resources-for-library-professionals>**

The resources are offered as part of ALA's Libraries Transforming Communities initiative.

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## DayByDayVA



[WWW.DAYBYDAYVA.ORG](http://WWW.DAYBYDAYVA.ORG)

**FAMILY LITERACY CALENDAR**

**What is more important in a library than anything else -  
than everything else - is the fact that it exists.**

~ Archibald MacLeish ~

# Youth Services Notes

is issued weekly by

**Enid Costley**

**Children's and Youth Services Consultant**

**Library Development and Networking**

**Library of Virginia**

**800 East Broad Street**

**Richmond, Virginia 23219-1905**

**Phone: 804.692.3765**

**Fax: 804.692.3771**

**E-mail: [enid.costley@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:enid.costley@lva.virginia.gov)**

**Extranet: [www.vpl.virginia.gov](http://www.vpl.virginia.gov)**

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**communities and individuals thrive through broad**

**public access to knowledge, cultural heritage, and**

**lifelong learning. This newsletter project is made**

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**Museum and Library Services.**



INSTITUTE of  
**Museum and Library**  
SERVICES

*Thanks*

**for the photos and information!**

- ◇ **The usual suspects—ALA, VLA, Virginia Dept. of Health, PUBYAC, VPOST, Library Development and Networking**



## Dates to Remember

### Virginia Conferences

October 22-24, 2014 ..... Virginia Library Association ..... Williamsburg

### National Conferences

June 26–July 1, 2014 ..... American Library Association Annual Conference ..... Las Vegas

September 18-20, 2014 ..... Association for Library Service to Children National Institute ..... Oakland

November 14-16, 2014 ..... YALSA Young Adult Literature Symposium ..... Austin

January 30–February 3, 2015 ..... American Library Association Midwinter Conference ..... Chicago

June 25-30, 2015 ..... American Library Association Annual Conference ..... San Francisco

### Online Courses

September 8, 2014–October 3, 2014 ..... Importance of Play ( Dr. Betsy Diamant-Cohen ) ..... online

### Training

September 23-24, 2014 ..... Summer Reading: A Community Approach ..... Richmond

## Free Resources Available to Help Libraries Engage Community

Continued from page 1

Available materials include tools such as:

- **Aspirations/Aspirations Facilitator's Guide (PDF)** help libraries focus on their community's aspirations, identify next steps for creating change, and create an aspirations-based narrative for their community as a starting point for library action.
- **Turn Outward (PDF)** helps libraries assess the focus of their efforts in the community as they shift their orientation from internal to external.
- **Sustaining Yourself (PDF)** helps library professionals map the components that fuel their motivation and commitment for community work.
- **Community Conversation Workbook (PDF)** explains how to convene engaging community conversations that will elicit substantial, actionable feedback from residents. The guide is accompanied by a webinar.
- **Theming and Using Public Knowledge Workbook (PDF)** demonstrates how to organize and understand the information collected during community conversations and how to share what you have learned with others. The guide is accompanied by a webinar.

For a full list of resources, as well as a 90-day guide for getting started with the "turning outward" approach, visit [ala.org/LTC](http://ala.org/LTC) –

<http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/libraries-transforming-communities/resources-for-library-professionals>

### About Libraries Transforming Communities

Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC) is an ALA initiative that seeks to strengthen libraries' roles as core community leaders and change-agents. LTC addresses a critical need within the library field by developing and distributing new tools, resources and support for libraries to engage with their communities in new ways. As a result, ALA believes libraries will become more reflective of and connected to their communities and build stronger partnerships with local civic agencies, nonprofits, funders and corporations. The initiative is made possible through a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

### About The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation

The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation is a national nonprofit organization based in Bethesda, Md., that teaches and coaches people and organizations to solve pressing problems and change how communities work together. The institute is guided by Richard C. Harwood, whose transformational work during the past 25 years

Press Release, August 25, 2014. ■

## Virginia Department of Health

### **Getting Home Safe Is a Few Clicks Away**

The [Virginia Department of Health](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov) is sponsoring an awareness program during September and **Child Passenger Safety Week (September 14-20<sup>th</sup>)**. The project is "**Getting Home Safely is Just a Click Away**", focusing on child car seat safety through a whimsical Wizard of Oz theme. The project and activities are geared toward children 4-8 years old and includes an activity packet, reading materials, librarians dressing as characters from Wizard of Oz, or a safety pledge.

***This activity packet has been sent to each library system.***

It is filled with information and materials for you to consider implementing in your own library to bring awareness, especially to National Safety Seat Check Saturday on September 20th.

More resources may be found at:

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ofhs/prevention/cps/>

Links to free materials which may be downloaded or requested here:

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ofhs/prevention/cps/resources.htm>

**Virginia Department of Health** offers *FREE* child passenger safety resources. The following resources can be downloaded and printed or can be ordered by faxing the order form. Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery of materials. For questions about resources contact Jennifer Schmid at 804-864-7746 or [Jennifer.Schmid@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Schmid@vdh.virginia.gov).

- Child Passenger Safety Brochure-English/Spanish
- Child Passenger Safety Poster- English/Spanish
- A Parent's Guide to Protecting Your Baby With a Child Safety Seat-English
- A Parent's Guide to Protecting Your Baby With a Child Safety Seat-Spanish
- 4 Steps to Child Passenger Safety: Flipbooks Safety Activity Book

### **Safety Seat Checks**

Parents and caregivers can receive free hands-on help from a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician to learn how to install their safety seat, by visiting a Safety Seat Check Station or a Safety Seat Check Event.

If your library would like to promote an event or host a Safety Seat Check in your community. Please see for a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician in your area.

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ofhs/prevention/cps/permanent.htm>



**There is no substitute for books  
in the life of a child.**  
~ Mary Ellen Chase ~

## Young Adult Library Services Association

### **Back-to-Afterschool, New Readers' Advisory Tool, Book Sale & More**

#### **Teens' Top Ten Voting Going on Now through October 18**

The 2014 Teens' Top Ten nominees have been posted online since April. Now through **Teen Read Week™**, teens all over the world are encouraged to go online and vote for their favorites at

[www.ala.org/yalsa/reads4teens](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/reads4teens).

Bookmark the page on your web site and join the discussion on Twitter with #ttt14.

#### **Come Hang with YALSA and 30+ YA Authors!**

We'd love to see you in Austin, TX, YALSA for the 2014 YA Literature Symposium this year on November 14-16th. Check out the preliminary program, register at [www.ala.org/yalitsymposium](http://www.ala.org/yalitsymposium). Register by September 15th for a chance to win two free hotel nights! Join the conversation on Twitter with #yalit14

#### **Amp up your Teen Services**

Get ideas to refresh your overall teen services program with \$10 off each of three great YALSA titles now through September 30th with the coupon code YAL14. Learn more at <http://ow.ly/AniDz>

#### **Teen Book Finder App now Available on Android**

YALSA's free Teen Book Finder app is now available for both Apple and Android platforms. Library staff can now do readers' advisory on the go! The app features thousands of recommended reading for teens, and offers a 'find it' feature so teens can locate the library nearest them with the title in their collection.

For details, visit

[www.ala.org/yalsa/products/teenbookfinder](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/products/teenbookfinder).

Funding for the app is generously provided by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation.



#### **Join YALSA for our Wiki Write-In!**

YALSA's celebrating the birthday of the Internet on October 29th with a wiki write-in. We're calling on all library staff to come together on October 29th and share their knowledge with the library community at-large by contributing their tips, resources and success stories to YALSA's wiki. Together we can create the premier open access resource for library staff to better serve teens! YALSA's wiki can be found at

[http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Main_Page)

#### **Upcoming YALSA Activities & Events**

- **Now through October 18**, teens vote for the Teens' Top Ten, [www.ala.org/yalsa/reads4teens](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/reads4teens)
- **September 8**, call for program and paper proposals for YALSA's 2015 symposium opens, [www.ala.org/yalsa/events](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/events)
- **September 15**, early bird registration closes for the YA Lit Symposium, [www.ala.org/yalitsymposium](http://www.ala.org/yalitsymposium)
- **September 18**, webinar: Fencing Out Knowledge: The Impact of CIPA 10 Years Later and What It Means for You, [www.ala.org/yalsa/webinars](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/webinars)
- **September 23**, Titles for Teen Read Week webinar, [www.ala.org/teenread](http://www.ala.org/teenread)
- **September 30**, last day to order teen behavior and teens & tech curriculum kits at the 20% back-to-school discount via coupon code YSTK14, <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/young-adults-deserve-best>
- **October 1**, deadline to apply to host a Teens' Top Ten book group, [www.ala.org/yalsa/teenstopten](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/teenstopten)
- **October 6**, e-course: Power Programming for Teens, [www.ala.org/yalsa/onlinelearning/info](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/onlinelearning/info)
- **October 12 – 18**, Teen Read Week™, [www.ala.org/teenread](http://www.ala.org/teenread)
- **October 16**, webinar "Designing Teen Spaces in Libraries, [www.ala.org/yalsa/webinars](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/webinars)
- **October 13th**, advanced registration closes for the YA Lit Symposium, [www.ala.org/yalitsymposium](http://www.ala.org/yalitsymposium)
- **November 1**, MAE Collection Development Grant deadline, <http://ow.ly/yRyVk>
- **Week of November 3**, 2015 Teen Tech Week™ goes live at [www.ala.org/teentechweek](http://www.ala.org/teentechweek)
- **November 14 - 16**, YA Literature Symposium, [www.ala.org/yalsa/yalitsymposium](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/yalitsymposium)
- **December 1st**, most of YALSA's grants, awards, and scholarship applications due, [www.ala.org/yalsa/awardsandgrants/yalsaawardsgrants](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/awardsandgrants/yalsaawardsgrants)
- **Week of December 1st**: finalists announced for the Morris and Nonfiction awards, [www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists)

For more events and information, visit

[http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Calendar\\_of\\_Events](http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Calendar_of_Events)

Email dated September 2, 2014 from Beth Yoke, CAE,  
Executive Director, Young Adult Library Services Association





From PUIBYAC

## ALA News

### Bundle Registration for 2015 ALA Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference Is Open

Good morning!

Bundle registration for 2015 ALA Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference opened September 9, 2014: <http://www.ala.org/conferencesevents/bundle>

The ALA 2015 Midwinter Meeting site is now open: <http://alamw15.ala.org/>

Don Wood  
Program Officer  
Chapter Relations Office  
American Library Association  
50 East Huron Street  
Chicago, IL 60611

[dwood@ala.org](mailto:dwood@ala.org)

1-800-545-2433, ext. 2429; 312-280-2429

312-280-4392 (fax)

Posted September 9, 2014

### Register for Free Webinar on How to Participate in 2015 Money Smart Week @ your library

Register today for a free webinar on **October 1, 2014**, to learn how your library can participate in 2015 **Money Smart Week @ your library**.

Register at <http://tinyurl.com/opy5mvu> and participate in this hour-long webinar that will provide you with resources, promotional materials, programming ideas and ways to partner with others in your community, campus or school to get **Money Smart Week** going at your library.



**Money Smart Week @ your library, April 18-25, 2015**, is a national initiative in its fifth year between the American Library Association (ALA) and the Federal Reserve Bank (Chicago) to provide financial literacy programming to help members of your community—retirees, school kids, college students, everyone—better manage their personal finances. In 2014 over 700 libraries in 48 states participated.

Learn from veterans and first-timers how **Money Smart Week @ your library** has been a great success for their libraries and how it can be in yours. Discussions will show how easy it is to convey financial topics to your library users.

Topics presented last year include basic banking services, credit and debt management, estate planning, going green to save, housing/mortgages/foreclosures, going to college, identity theft/investment scams/financial fraud, insurance, kids and money, money management for women, preparing for financial emergencies, retirement planning, small business and entrepreneurship, taxes, teens and money and unemployment and job transitioning.

Visit the **Money Smart Week** home page of the Federal Reserve Bank (Chicago) at <http://www.moneysmartweek.org/> for additional details about Money Smart Week.

Contact the ALA Chapter Relations Office at 312-280-3200 for more information on how to participate in Money Smart Week @ your library, April 18-25, 2015. Also visit:

<http://www.ala.org/offices/money-smart-week>.

Don Wood  
Program Officer  
Chapter Relations Office  
American Library Association  
50 East Huron Street  
Chicago, IL 60611

[dwood@ala.org](mailto:dwood@ala.org)

1-800-545-2433, ext. 2429; 312-280-2429

312-280-4392 (fax)

Posted September 9, 2014 ■

More from PUIBYAC

### Fractured Fairytales

We have compiled a Pinterest board of that subject. Here is the link.

<http://www.pinterest.com/newcanaanlibrar/fractured-fairytale-booklist/>



Audrey Heneage  
New Canaan Library  
New Canaan, CT 06840  
Posted August 20, 2014 ■

**Librarians are very special people.  
They are the caregivers of the world  
of the mind, the nurturers of dreams  
and the defenders of truth.**

**Perhaps no other profession is so  
marked by the singular generosity  
of its practitioners**

~ Denver Post editorial ~  
March 25, 2000

More from PUBYAC**Storytime with Teenage Mothers**

In September, I will be starting a new storytime outreach program to our local Family Center. This Center works with teenage mothers, helping them to learn parenting skills while still continuing their high-school education. In the past, another children's librarian has provided this program, and he says that the group is a tough one. A Family Center employee says that the mothers do not see the value in reading to their children. I currently do the Infant and Toddler storytimes in house, but am at a slight loss as to how to best reach out to these mothers. Does anyone have any experience on what might work well? Any tips and tricks would be most appreciated. Thanks in advance. *Posted August 14, 2014 by Abigail Andrews, Children's Department, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740. Thanks to everyone who sent me so many great ideas! I've had several requests for a compilation, so [hopefully] this will help others who are looking to start a similar program or who need a boost with a current program. It's a lengthy list, but a wonderful one! Posted August 18, 2014.*

🐦 What you have here is a multi-dimensional problem. One issue is that these young ladies do not often see into the future. They are generally at or below the poverty level, or in depressed neighborhoods where academic skills are below par and thinking beyond tomorrow is a luxury. Also, if you are a government agency, you may be looked upon as they enemy and they will try [to] get you before you get them.

I did a similar class some years ago. My first class not so successful. The second class for some reason, I asked them to envision what kind of life they wanted for their child when said child grew up. I got a bunch of blank looks. Then I told them that my goal for my children was that they had good jobs so that they could take care of me in comfort in my old age. That got a laugh, but it also started them thinking about the future. Then I told them why reading to their children starting as babies was important and that our goal for the program was to give them training on making it easy, fun and a great way to bond with their children. Remember that these girls don't always get pregnant by accident and that even if they do, lots of times, they are looking for unconditional love from their kids as they feel they don't get it from home. By making this an exercise to develop a closeness with their children, they will more readily respond. Also - remember that their reading skills may not be up to snuff. They need to know (in as gentle and round about way as possible)

that their skill level does not have to be a deterrent to sharing a book with their child.

Don't be discouraged. While they may not show that you are making a difference, the truth is, you are.

🐦 I saw your post on PUBYAC. I am currently working on an article for VOYA magazine about teens and several aspects of reading aloud, including teen parents reading to their children. I think that a good way for you to approach this might be to teach the parents about the value of reading aloud to their children first, before trying to get them to actually do it. There are some great resources you can use for this:

Mem Fox's book "Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to Your Children Will Change Their Lives Forever" is a wonderful one. A librarian from New Mexico I met at ALA (and who shared some great information with me about reading aloud for my article) says she buys copies of this title in used bookstores whenever she can, and distributes the copies to the teen parents she works with.

I found this link in my research, and because it is so simple and straightforward, it might work well to get the point across to teen parents who have trouble acknowledging the importance of reading aloud:

<http://www2.readaloud.org/importance?gclid=CJaQzZmlcACFbRzMgodPFoAFA>

I also found this nice little RIF handout that you could make copies of to give to the teen parents. Again, it is simple and straightforward, so it just might reach them with this important information.

[http://www.rif.org/documents/us/reading\\_aloud.pdf](http://www.rif.org/documents/us/reading_aloud.pdf)

Last, once they "get" the background information about why reading aloud to children is vital, if you can get a local agency of some kind to donate or fund the purchase of brand new board or picture books that you can give out for free to these teen parents to keep and use, it might encourage them to follow through. Also, make sure they have library cards and know how to find books for their children in the library.



🐦 Be straight up with them. I do this with teens a lot. Explain how with knowledge comes power. With power comes respect. With respect comes money. To gain all of these you have to instill the need and want of knowledge early in life so it would be easier to understand the ins and outs of society as a whole and they can navigate better. This is explained to the

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## Storytime with Teenage Mothers

*Continued from page 6*

parents in a no nonsense way. Then tell a story (without the book) of a book that is very interactive for the kids. When done pull out the book and show the parents that:

1. It came from a book.
  2. Just because it's from a book does not mean you can't make it fun.
  3. Imagination can be a wonderful tool in teaching their children morals and values.
- Also keep it short. If it is too long you will lose them. Start with just one book and maybe a craft.

Are these mothers with their children at the time you are meeting them? Or are you supposed to do a workshop of sorts? Either way, I would make it as fun as possible. Even if it is a workshop, I would present it as a storytime, not a class, and just make it as interactive and joyously fun as you can. These mothers may not feel confident in their own reading skills or feel fully bonded with their children, which is probably why they don't enjoy reading aloud to their kids. But I'll tell you what- there is no way they can witness a raucous reading/singing of "I Ain't Gonna Paint No More" and not see the value. Make it interactive too- I like reading "The Little Red Hen Makes a Pizza" and giving everyone stick puppets with the dog, duck and cat and making them say "Not I!" at the appropriate times. Try funny and rhythmic books... "Pete the Cat and his Four Groovy Buttons" might be fun. Make them laugh. Do a story that gets everyone moving....maybe "How do You Wokka Wokka". And if it is for babies, do songs and fingerplays that are fun...and the really cute lullaby songs. Remind them that singing and playing are a part of early literacy too.

And at the end, just spend maybe two minutes talking about value and merit in reading to kids and just give one handout. Don't make it a boring class. They will organically see the value in what you are doing by experiencing it. And if the kids are there- all the better! When they see the smiles on the kid's faces, they'll get it.



What about starting out with explaining Mem Fox's philosophy that if a child does not hear 1,000 books ( and therefore all the digraphs, sounds, diphthongs, etc.) before Kindergarten, they will never develop all the skills to become good readers and will start out school disadvantaged...? From her 1,000 books before Kindergarten program:

<http://memfox.com/for-parents/for-parents-ten-read-aloud-commandments/>

I have worked with teen mothers quite a bit, and I agree, they are a tough group. Just remember, even though they seem to have no interest in what you're doing or presenting, they ARE listening, and they are getting something out of what you're doing. They might really surprise you when you least expect it. When I had a group of pregnant teens, many of them had their heads down on the table, seemed to be asleep, would barely respond if I asked them anything... but as time went on, I could see results. I also learned that reaching out to them with YA books that they might enjoy often times works wonders. I found this out once when I took a group of pregnant teens to our big central library to observe a baby storytime. Ho, hum. Then I took them to the Young Adult section of the library, and a YA librarian gave them a tour and book talked several books she knew they might like, plus she had some give-away books to give them. Boy, did they perk up! I realized then that by possibly sparking their own interest in reading things they're interested in, they would be much more likely to read to their babies, too!

I did a program where we gave books to mothers in such a group and made suggestions as to how they could use the books with their children rather than preaching that they should read to the child.



I would focus on the fact that reading to your child doesn't have to be a big production. They don't have to read ten chapters of Tolstoy to make a difference! And the other key aspects of Every Child Ready to Read - Sing, Talk, Write, and Play. Sing in the car. Moms can talk to the kids about homework. I would also point out the cost-benefits of early literacy. Early literacy development can lead to higher paying jobs and better quality of life for the child, etc...

I did an early literacy training for teen parents at a high school in DC one semester, and I found the teens to be pretty receptive. Despite what the other librarian says, I'd try to avoid going in with the preconceived notion that they will be a tough group. It might be that you will have a totally different relationship to them than the librarian who worked with them before. (Also I think teens have a sixth sense about when adults think of them as "tough" and they close themselves off accordingly.) A lot of these teens often come from families where reading is not part of the culture. They


*(Continued on page 8)*



## Storytime with Teenage Mothers

*Continued from page 7*


may even have parents/grandparents/siblings telling them that reading to their little ones is a waste of time, or just not a priority. I think you have to counteract that by showing off how easy it is to do and how much fun, and by demonstrating how much the kids like it. I would stick to story time materials that you know and love, and perform your story time with a clear enthusiasm and love for what you are doing. Engage the kids first, and use the kids' interest to fuel their parents' interest. I wouldn't go in with guns blazing, spouting lots of early literacy info to try and win them over to your way of thinking; rather, model and teach by your example. Expect them to question what you are doing - they are moms, but they are also teenagers, and questioning is just part of working with kids of that age. And it can't hurt either to ask them if there are any books or songs they remember from childhood. They may not realize that sharing those things with their own kids is beneficial. The program I did also had some money built in for buying books to give to the teens and their kids. That made a huge difference to the teens in my group, and many of them came back to their teacher and said how much those books meant to them. If there is funding for such a thing, it can be a great way to make a connection.

 I do not have a ton of experience in this department, but I did do a couple of storytimes at a high school for young mothers. (and I do have a number of years as a child's librarian). It is a tough draw in that these parents are still kids themselves. I think the key is to realize that more than any other storytime, the parents are your main audience. Respecting these young adults as parents may be new experience for them. So remind them to talk, read, sing, play with their babies with the assumption that of course they will or already are doing it. What I mean is, give them the benefit of the doubt that they are trying to do the very best for their babies, just like we assume for the parents that walk into the library storytime. Because they are! It's got to be tough to have a baby and continue with high school.

Having said that, you work it exactly as you would a normal baby/infant storytime, reading your audience as to how much instruction they want to get and mentioning "teaching points" occasionally, but mostly focusing on fun. Assuming this is a small crowd, try every time to point out to each parent what their child seems to be enjoying, i.e., "look at you, baby, you love this song, don't you?" "Look at those eyes, you can practically see this baby's brain growing!" "You are so smart, that is the itty bitty spider, show mommy how to do it too!" "Baby, that picture is catching your

attention- do you like seeing that teddy bear, of course you do! I think Mommy likes it to, don't you?" Not in a condescending tone, but in a matter of fact, "of course you are enjoying this activity with your child." I would frequently say things like, "You are clearly proud of this baby," or "this baby sure loves his mom," "Somebody thinks you're pretty special!" This kind of thing shows respect for the parents that they are sure to appreciate. I think the main thing is to sound authentic- if you really don't like the parent, it's obviously going to be tougher. But I am guessing you will see a vulnerability sooner than you expect because this is a group that's going to want approval and probably hasn't gotten a lot of it. I realize I'm stereotyping, but I doubt many teen pregnancies are received with delight, even if the resulting infant becomes treasured by all.

Encourage participation and home practice. If the parents are embarrassed to join in, remind them that their babies love the sound of their voices- they don't have to read like a professional actor or sing like Beyoncé for their child to think they are the best ever. If the children are infants, remind the mother's they can read their homework assignments aloud, because it's the sound/rhythm of the voice that matters. Praise the parents for their participation, "what a lucky baby you are to have a mama that reads/sings/dances/ etc. with you." I don't care how old you are, we all love compliments and reminders that we are doing the right thing. When storytime is over, matter of factly hand the parents books to share, or copies of a song or a fingerplay, "because you and your baby had so much fun with this." Tell them it's ok to sing Beyoncé (or whatever) instead of "Itsy Bitsy Spider," if it's more comfortable to them. If this is a drop in group, once you have a few established, broach the idea of them encouraging other friends to come. And they need encouragement that doing right by their child doesn't have to be drudgery, that playing is important, that having fun is important, and that their child will surely be successful because they will see how important they are in their family and hard their mom is working to be a good mom. Ditto ditto ditto if it's a dad.

 Here is a brief overview: Young Moms Club meets once a month at the library in the evenings for storytime, an activity, and dinner. The program originally started out as something that was grant funded through the community and located in the schools--the library was just one piece of it. Once that funding went away, the library picked it up as its own program. To get teen parents to come, we offer dinner (usually something small and light like sandwiches, hot foods from the grocery store or pizza--we don't have any means of cooking). The parents are also given incentives for coming--but they have to do some things

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## Storytime with Teenage Mothers

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before they get the "prizes." They have a card to fill out each month with activities like "read to your baby," "sing nursery rhymes together," "let your child see you reading," "visit the library," and more. They have to do six of eight activities and then they get to pick out something from a door prize basket. These items are small things like little board books, lotions, pacifiers, bibs, etc. At the end of the night, we take the cards and pull one grand prize winner who receives a bag filled with books, bottles, formula (if I can get it), or whatever else I might have that month.

The actual program usually starts with a storytime and literacy tip. I started eliminating the chairs from the storytime and asking parents to sit on the floor with their children which tends to help them participate more. Then we do a craft like scrapbooking. We eat dinner. And if there's time after, I bring out the toys for the children. Sometimes, instead of a full storytime, we will do an activity like yoga, mommy and me dance class, gardening, etc.

I also allow them to pick out a couple books off the shelf that I will extend the due date on until the next meeting to encourage them to check out books (I only do this on books they will read with their children). It has had a good response. The program has been successful over the years--some of the moms were 16 when they started coming and now their children are entering Kindergarten and first grade.

The hardest part is recruiting teens to come to the program. We do offer bus passes to those that need a ride to the library. Of course, everything is on the honor system. When I go to the schools (if I can meet with the teen parents), I always try to take a book for them to keep to help them build a library of books at home. I know that I'm not always going to get a response out of them (sometimes I feel like I'm talking to myself), but if just one of them comes that month, I know at least one of them was listening. I always tell them to bring a friend or relative. It's called "Young Moms' Club" but we don't exclude dads or other relatives from coming.

I've recently taken the program "on the road." I've been going to the schools and metropolitan housing neighborhoods more frequently and doing mini-versions of the same program. I'm hoping by doing this, I can entice more people to come to the program at the library.

I would say one piece of advice that was given to me when I took over the program was to always have someone help with the program. And if you don't get a good showing one month, don't get discouraged. It's a very hard age group to work with and they don't

always see the purpose. You have to make it fun and entertaining not only for the babies, but also for the teens.



Do you play any instruments? I play rudimentary guitar and find that people have a higher opinion of storytime simply because of the presence of the guitar. I'm lost without it. Did the person prior to you try to help make the connection between reading to children and doing well in school?



Our local high school that has a childcare center in house. In the past, I visited once or twice a semester, took materials related to early literacy, and modeled reading. (We have early literacy bags that contain puppets, books, and games. We also have a list of 100 books to read before Kindergarten.) Last year, I partnered with the high school librarian and we visited the center six times. Each time we read with the babies, provided each parent/baby with board books to build their home libraries and rhymes/songs printed on laminated card that they could sing at home/in the car, etc. We met during lunch and the school catered. It was sometimes hard to get the teen parents to sit down with us, but at least the babies were loving it, which tended to draw the parents back in. Since we had two librarians, one of us usually read with the babies and daycare staff, while the other visited with the teen parents, talked about strategies, etc. Sometimes we also had crafts for the parents. One visit we decorated canvas bags with handprints, so each had a "book bag", and another visit I gave them the supplies to make small mobile felt board from plastic wipe containers.

I don't believe we ever did a "themed" storytime. I would usually just grab fun board books to share. In my opinion, this has been one of the most rewarding programs we've done. We really enjoy being able to spend time with both the babies and the parents. Meeting them on "their turf" takes off the pressure and helps to reinforce the idea that we support them and want to help them reach their goals and be successful, both educational and as parents.



Yes, teen parents can be a challenging audience. Although most want to be good parents, they are still teenagers, so they try to be cool at the same time. Most teen parents don't know why you should read to their babies because they are not readers themselves. Also, babies don't seem to do much but eat, sleep, poop, and cry so reading to them seems unnecessary. I worked with my school's teen parenting program several years, doing programs at the school and then holding an event at the library. My allies were the social workers at the school who knew the kids. They


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## Storytime with Teenage Mothers

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knew their situations and their babies and helped me connect to each teen. I would say be as authentic as you can about your reason for being there and your message. Understand that they don't know all the research on child-rearing, so they might be lost as to what they should do. Tell them the reasons for reading to babies, explain the benefits, and give demonstrations. I found short StoryTimes, 15 minutes or so, were better than longer ones. Talk one-on-one or in small groups with them, ask them about their babies and themselves. Engaging them in conversation helps make connections.

At my library event, we did a short StoryTime and then had crafts for the parents to do while we helped watch the babies. The teens loved making texture books for their babies from various art supplies. Similar to this, <http://thefeltmouse.blogspot.com/2008/12/for-kids.html>, only we made books out of construction paper. The teen parents loved doing the craft. It can be challenging but it's also rewarding when you make that connection with the kids and help them realize how much they can do to help their babies.

 I have been working with teen moms for 7 years and hope that I can give you some helpful tips-


1. The best way to get them on board is to make it fun for their children. When they see the pleasure that their children are getting they are more willing to go along. But, it will take time- by the end of the year they may be with you.
2. Make your program interactive, but don't expect the moms to participate much- I know that sounds like a contradiction. You have to interact with the children- use simple flannelboards, pop-up books, animal sound books, puppets, lots of songs & movement activities. Talk to the group facilitators and ask them to be there for the program and participate to model what the moms should do.
3. When you introduce a book, briefly explain how/ what it helps their child learn. That helps them start to see the value of reading aloud. And talk about how you use the book when you read to a child- pointing things out in the pictures, making sounds, etc.- they usually have no intuitive sense of that.
4. Young toddler is usually about the right level for the program. Often the children are young for their age, so even preschoolers enjoy the younger (but not "babyish" stories.)
5. Another way to build participation is to add something extra before/after the program- some simple play or craft activities that the parents can do with their child- even if the child is too young to 

do much, the moms enjoy doing them. And you are again modeling for them how to be a child's first teacher. Also, they always seem to be hungry and appreciate a simple snack.

6. If there is any way that you can manage it, giving each of them a board book to keep at every session is really great. You can use the book in your program and explain to them how to read it to their child. The best responses I hear are when one of the moms says, "My son just loves it when I read that book you gave us to him. He asks for it all the time." Sometimes friends groups will pay for the books, or you can get donations from local bookstores.

I co-authored a book, *Serving Teen Parents: from Literacy to Life Skills*, that was published in 2011. It has lots more specific ideas.

Don't be too hard on yourself if you don't get a good response, but over time some moms will get the message.

 I've had some experience working with a local crisis home for teenage mothers, and I'd love to help if I can. When the parents started coming to storytime they were completely disengaged and didn't participate at all. The first 2 or 3 visits with them were a little uncomfortable definitely, but don't give up! These moms need you, because they a lot of them just truly don't know how to parent. They don't see the value in reading to their children because no one has ever taught them how or why they should. Also, have you considered inviting the Family Center parents to join a traditional storytime at the library? This helped immensely with my teen moms. I found that they looked to the other moms for guidance after the first few classes and the moms were extremely welcoming and generous with the teens. They were great about giving tips and advice about what to do with their baby when they weren't sleeping, eating, etc. I always start my sessions with telling everyone how great of a parent they're being by coming to storytime. I also talk about how reading to your child helps with their development and helps get them ready for school. I never speak down to them, and I always make sure the "fun facts" I give are easy to understand. I don't cite statistics or studies to them. I'll say something like, "My fun fact of the day is that singing to your baby is one of the easiest ways to bond with them. Even if you're tone deaf, your baby doesn't care! It loves to hear your voice and singing is very soothing to them."

I also have a 20 minute playtime at the end of my infant and baby storytimes. Again, expect this to be awkward the first couple of times, but this is probably the most valuable time I spend with the parents. This

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## Storytime with Teenage Mothers

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gave me an opportunity to interact with them and ask questions about their baby. It was also a great opportunity to model how to play with babies. I've had a few teen moms tell me how awkward they feel playing or reading to their baby because they obviously don't respond back. I just tell them that they are being such amazing parents by doing those things. Every time they talk to the baby they're helping it with its vocabulary and emotions and when they play they are forming a bond with their child!



I would take two steps:

1 - start by establishing a rapport with them. This can take several sessions. Chat with them about their babies, share any stories about your own if you have them, bring snacks. They will automatically see you as yet another authority figure who wants to tell them what to do, and who probably looks down on them. You won't get anywhere until you get past that, but it's totally doable.

2 - Once you feel you are there, ask them what they want for their babies? Now, in five years, ten years, twenty years? Talk about things they can do (including but not limited to literacy) that can help them get there. Then when you are talking about prereading skills and techniques for sharing them, remind them that they are probably already doing a lot of these things, they just don't call it this fancy name - do they sing songs to their baby? Talk to him while they are changing his diaper? That's working on reading. Maybe add other ways it can help - does your baby drive you crazy with fussing in the checkout line, at a restaurant? Keep a favorite book in your purse for just those times, or learn some silly rhyming games that will distract him.



I would focus on making your story time as interactive and movement-oriented as possible. I do a lot of story time at childcare centers and I never or hardly ever read more than two books per story time. Instead I do a lot of other literacy activities to connect the books I read. Flannel board stories, songs, or guessing games on the flannel board are wonderful! And for ideas on flannel board activities, I recommend the resource book *Ready to Go Story Times* by Gail Benton. Also, any movement or music activity using scarves, bean bags, egg shakers, parachute, or just dancing around. I love Hap Palmer's *So Big* CD (try the songs "I'm a Pretzel", "Five Little Monkeys", or "Put Your Hands Up in the Air"), Laurie Berkner's *Whaddaya Think of That* CD (try "The Airplane Song", "We are the Dinosaurs", or "I Know a Chicken" using egg shakers, very fun!) Greg and Steve's *Kids in Motion* CD (try any song but especially "The Freeze") or anything at all by

Jim Gill - he's got lots of fun movement songs on all his CD's.

I also have a game I do at the end of every story time. I have a box that I have covered in blue fabric - the blue box - but you can make it any color or shape. On the outside is a letter and on the inside are things that begin with that letter. I sing a song and children must guess what the objects inside the blue box are...so, for letter "B" I might put in a bouncy ball, a bear finger puppet, butterfly finger puppet, a small book, etc. Then I pull out a stamp that also begins with the letter on the box and children each get a stamp at the end of story time. Anytime you can share a book or an activity that is funny or has a personal, relevant story that people can really connect with, I find this helps capture the group. This way, you never actually say in so many words that reading is both important but really fun too but everything you do in your program communicates this message.

A few other thoughts... Is it possible that the mothers in the group can't read very well so feel intimidated to try and read books with their children? If this is the case, I would either bring in wordless books for them to look at with their children at some point during the program and even share some during your story times with the whole group. There are so many fabulous wordless or nearly wordless books out there - Jez Alborough has several, *Good Night Gorilla* by Peggy Rathmann, *Wave* by Suzy Lee, *South* by Patrick McDonnell, Barbara Lehmann has several, *Picnic* and *Four Hungry Kittens* by Emily Arnold McCully, *Where's Walrus* by Stephen Savage, *Breakfast for Jack* by Pat Schories (and other Jack stories) to name a few. Sharing wordless books and encouraging their children to tell them the stories through pictures could really help boost their confidence in their abilities to read with their children and share books together. Or at least getting books with just a few words per page that are also entertaining. Mo Willems is a master at this with his *Elephant and Piggie* series. Also, even though they come to the library and can check books out, if it is at all possible to get some book donations so they can actually take a few books home to keep as part of your program - this may also make a world of difference for some mothers. They may not own any books and this might be huge for their children and themselves.

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**The worst thing about new books  
is that they keep us from  
reading the old ones.**


*- Joseph Joubert -*




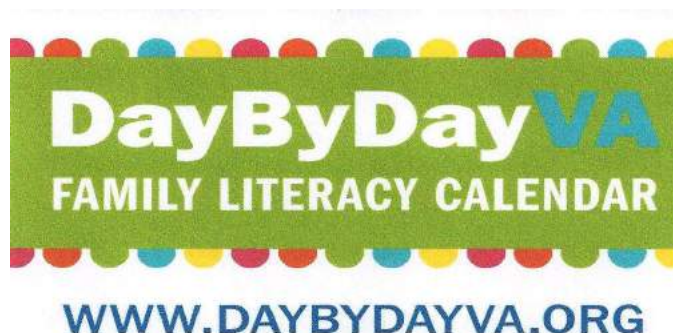
## Storytime with Teenage Mothers

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I know that you can often get great deals in bulk through Scholastic.

 A while ago, I edited a series of videos for a program at the Free Library of Philadelphia. The videos show the importance of reading to children and lots of tips. You might want to show them or just look them for tips yourself. Anyway, you are free to show them <http://www.lansdownelibrary.org/#!early-literacy-videos/c1x6l>

 I do a lot of work with teen parents too and I've found that it seems to go better if I start off in a less structured storytime and build to a more traditional one. Try letting the parents each choose a board book from a stack and look at it with their baby to begin, then you read aloud and sing some songs. Choose books that will be attractive to teens, this means I often use books that have more humor in them or more complex artwork than I normally do with babies. For the parents to see the value in reading to babies, they have to find books they enjoy themselves. If I have the option to only work with the parents, I try to do a book exploration instead, I bring lots of books that support the early literacy skill I am working on and we have an unstructured conversation about books. I try to include books they may remember from their childhood and get them talking about their own experiences if they have them. This usually turns to a support group with the parents giving each other tips. I've done make-and-takes as well which gives them something hands-on to do while we converse about the skill I want to address. One that many families seem to enjoy is something I call a Spin-a-Story. I use a cylindrical container like an oatmeal container, cover it with construction paper and then tape or glue pictures cut from magazines that appeal to babies. I then cover the entire thing with contact paper. Sometimes families have photographs they want to use too. Since it is a cylinder, it rolls so it is great for babies doing tummy time. The caregiver can then talk, make up stories, or sing about the pictures. Pretty easy to create and the adults get to personalize it. I have also done discovery bottles, (plastic bottles with a variety of materials in them), homemade word books using pictures from magazines, and rhyme cubes. There are many things you could do though. Look at the book *Serving Teen Parents* by Ellin Klor and Sarah Lapin if you haven't already. ■



The Library of Virginia is delighted to offer the Virginia Day By Day Family Literacy Activity Calendar. Here you and your child can embark on an adventure together through books and reading and the many fun-filled activities that spring from them. This calendar will help you identify events and activities that support early learning and ensure that your child is ready for school and ready to read independently.



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**Children's and Youth Services Fall  
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## Children's & Youth Services Fall Workshop

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